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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a Nursing Home Ombudsman Program, developed to provide employment for the "unemployable" older adult, that hired 19 older adults to work 20 hours per week for a year, providng friendly visits to senior residents living in nursing homes and minimum outreach services to community seniors. A two-week, eight-session orientation program for the ombudsmen is outlined. Inservice training including seminars, lectures, films, and field trips that continued throughout the program is delineated along with a description of individual supervision by the program coordinator. Results of opinionnaires completed at the end of the year by nursing home staff members involved in the program are presented, with evaluations of the ombudsmen in terms of their sensitivity, concern, empathy, communication skills, confidentiality, and other characteristics important to the program. The paper concludes with two observations about the program, i.e., the ombudsmen's sense of personal worth and involvement benefits from their employment, and their good or excellent ratings in the care dimensions of a therapeutic relationship. (NRB)

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The Administration on Aging Ombudsman Developmental Specialist Program in Illinois as a means of Enhancing the Visibility of The Older American

by

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for

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The AOA Ombudsman Developmental Specialist Program in Illinois
as
The Title X Nursing Home Ombudsman Program

Introduction

The purpose of the Title X Nursing Home Ombudsman Program, in the State of Illinois, was to bring about action that would provide employment for the unemployable Older American. The Program stemmed from the Federal Economic and Development Act which stated: "that those persons hired must be at least 60 years of age, or older, and have been unemployed for a period of 15 weeks or more." The federal money was allocated to the State of Illinois and delegated immediately to the Illinois Department on Aging. Proportionate amounts were then distributed, based upon their population of Older Americans, to each of the 13 Area Agencies on Aging located throughout the State of Illinois. The first of the thirteen area agencies to activate the project hired a full-time coordinator who was charged with the responsibility of recruiting, screening, interviewing, and hiring eligible older persons throughout a twelve county area. Nineteen Older Americans were subsequently hired to work 20 hours per week for approximately a 52 week period.

The nineteen persons hired were to have the primary responsibility of providing Friendly Visitation to senior residents living in Nursing Homes within his/her county boundaries along with providing minimum Outreach Services for seniors who did not reside in a Nursing Home. Their's is a very important job. They must have the willingness to

invest a year of self in helping others. They must have the respect for the dignity of the nursing home resident and know that their relationship with them is strictly confidential. The Friendly Visitor must be willing to accept supervision as they are really part of a helping team.

In order to be certified the nineteen persons hired were required to attend a two week orientation prior to assuming their assignments as Ombudsman. (24 hour contact time) During the remaining months of their contrac the Ombudsman were given regular in-service training and individual supervision by the coordinator. The in-service training included seminars, lectures, films, and field trips. Individual supervision by the coordinator was directed towards the personal development of the Ombudsman as it related to his/her role in the community.

At the end of a year an opinionaire was mailed to the contact person identified in each of the Nursing Homes who had agreed to participate in the Program. The contact person had been responsible for making the referrals of the Nursing Home residents to the Ombudsman for visitation. In an effort to provide the Ombudsman workers with concrete objectives in their interaction with clients, specific ingredients of the helping relationship were emphasized during the two week orientation. These characteristics were subsequently reported upon by means of the opinionaire. (see page 7)

The following outline describes the 24 hour orientation given to the nineteen Ombudsman workers:

Techniques For Friendly Visiting

Session I - 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Title: (a) Historical Perspectives of Ombudsman Program

Presentors: Illinois State Nursing Home Ombudsman, Illinois Department on Aging

Deputy Director & Chief of the Division of Administrative Services, Illinois Department on Aging

Title: (b) Who Are the Nursing Home Residents?

Presentors: Activity Program Consultant

Session II - 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Title: Resources Available in Problem Solving

Presentors: Director, Area Agency on Aging
Counselor, Senior Center
Nursing Home Activity Director

Session III - 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Title: Residents Rights and Responsibilities - Ombudsman's Responsibilities

Presentors: Division of Gerontology & Long Term Care Programs
Department of Public Health, State of Illinois

Medical Assistance Consultant
Department of Public Aid, State of Illinois

After Care Coordinator
Springfield Mental Health Association

Session IV

Field Trip: Nursing Home Visit

Practice in friendly visiting
Tour of facility

Session V - 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Title: Developing Self-Awareness - Use of Role Playing Techniques

Presentor: Professor, Human Development Counseling Program
Sangamon State University

Session VI

Field Trip: Nursing Home Visit

Meeting a resident council
Tour of facility

Session VII - 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Title: Interviewing Skills

Presentor: Professor, Human Development Counseling Program
Sangamon State University

Session VIII - 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Title: Review, Evaluation & Presentations

Presentor: Director, Area Agency on Aging
State Ombudsman

* Certificates of Accomplishment from Lincoln Land Community College were presented to each of the Ombudsman at the conclusion of the 2 week orientation.

Nursing Home Ombudsman Profile

Field Visitor Profile:	
Sex	
Female	15
Male	2
Age	Average Age - 65 yrs. 8 mo.
55-60	2
60-65	6
65-70	7
over-70	2
Education	Average Education Level - 10 yrs. 6 mo.
GS	2
SHS	9
HS	4
SC	1
C/+	1

* Two of the original ombudsman were unable to fulfill their contract therefore seventeen workers were evaluated at the end of the year.

Hours of Service	
Total hours for 17 Workers	13,949 hours
Coordinator	237 hours
Contacts Made	
Typical Example by:	1 Nursing Home Worker: (135 calls unduplicated) (672 calls duplicated) Average unduplicated - (11.25 calls per mo. Average " - (2.59 calls per wk. Average duplicated - (56 calls per mo. Average " - (12.92 calls per wk. 1 Outreach Worker: (284 calls) Average - (23.66 calls per mo. " - (5.46 calls per wk. Mileage - (2,761.5) Area - (484 square miles)

RESULTS OF OPINIONNAIRE

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
(1) Has the Field Visitor been regular in his/her attendance to your facility?	53.33%	27 %	13.33%		.06%
(2) Has the Field Visitor demonstrated the following characteristics with the residents?					
(a) sensitive to human problems.	52 %	41.37%	.06%		
(b) empathic.	60 %	37 %	.03%		
(c) communicate concern.	33.33%	57 %	1 %		
(d) to accept people as they are.	50 %	40 %	1 %		
(e) to maintain perspective.	20 %	63.33%	.06%	1 %	
(f) to evaluate conditions.	21.42%	57 %	11 %		
(g) to respect confidentiality.	43.33%	43 %	1 %		.03%
(3) Has the Field Visitor demonstrated the following characteristics with your staff?					
(a) to communicate a problem that may exist for a resident.	37 %	43 %	13 %		.06%
(b) to accurately evaluate a problem.	27 %	47 %	17 %		1 %
(c) to objectively follow suggestions regarding a resident.	45 %	38 %	10 %		.06%
(4) Do you believe the training has been sufficient for the Field Visitors so that he/she was able to do the task to the best of his/her ability?	35 %	55 %	.06%		.03%

(a) If answer is Fair/Poor/Very Poor, please suggest ways in which training could be improved.

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(5) I would appreciate additional comments in regard to the program and its personal effects in your facility.

No comments submitted.

* Forty-four opinionnaires were mailed and thirty-four were returned.

CONCLUSION

It is recongized that the relatively short period of time and small number of workers who were surveyed in their interaction with Older Americans limits the conclusions which may be drawn from the survey. However, there are some inescapable facts which warrant observation:

(1) As the Field Visitor returned into the mainstream of society it was observed by their supervisors and other staff that there was an unparalleled enthusiasm for their activity and for the tasks they were asked to perform. It appeared that the Field Visitors' sense of personal worth and involvement was observably induced by his/her return to employment. It is doubtful that a younger group of persons given a similar assignment would have shown more dedication or energy in the completion of their task. It would appear that the projects' faith in the Field Visitors' ability to carry out the assignment was a stimulus to the Field Visitor as it in turn gave him/her a feeling of competency and perhaps a return of faith in himself/herself which was lost as a result of mandatory retirement.

(2) From the survey it was learned that the Field Visitor was rated good or excellent in all of the care dimensions of a therapeutic relationship: His/her ability to be sensitive,

empathetic, communicate concern, accept others, and to be genuine. In only a statistically insignificant number of cases was the Field Visitor rated fair to poor.